



Hon. Pedro R. Pierluisi
Statement and Question as Prepared for Delivery
Oversight Hearing on H.R. 2278 the "Strengthen and Fortify Enforcement Act"
(The SAFE Act)
House Committee on the Judiciary
June 13, 2013

Good Afternoon,

Let me start by restating my unequivocal support for Comprehensive Immigration Reform as the best course of action for Congress and America in seeking to fix our broken immigration system. We need a common-sense reform that will meet our nation's needs in the 21st century, and it must hold true to our American values.

Real reform must take into account that the challenges that our immigration system faces today are multifaceted. They are not situations that can be dealt with through isolated initiatives that only address one aspect or another. That approach will not result in a better America, and will squander the historic window of opportunity that presently exists while true bipartisan efforts are underway in both the House and the Senate to find comprehensive solutions to these critical issues.

Unfortunately, the enforcement only approach offered by the SAFE Act falls short of accomplishing what America needs and wants us to accomplish, which is reform that works for our economy, that strengthens and secures our borders and our interior, that helps America attract needed talent and expertise, that allows undocumented immigrants already in America an

opportunity to legalize their status and apply for citizenship, and that improves the efficiency and fairness of our legal immigration system to vastly reduce illegal immigration.

While I understand and share the Majority's desire to improve our nation's security, I don't believe that the approach of the SAFE Act, which would combine the criminalization of undocumented immigrants with the delegation of authority to States and localities to enact and enforce their own immigration laws, would accomplish that goal. It is a very risky approach to a complicated problem and could cause grave harm to communities everywhere by opening the doors to racial profiling, wrongful detention, and the criminalization of otherwise innocent behavior.

Question:

My question is for Ms. Clarissa Martinez-De-Castro from the National Council of La Raza (NCLR).

Ms. Castro, in your testimony you mentioned the case of Eduardo Caraballo, a U.S. citizen born in Puerto Rico, who was arrested by Chicago police and held for more than three days in the custody of federal agents on suspicion of being undocumented and was threatened with deportation because of his "Mexican appearance." Do you believe that if states and localities are allowed to enact their own immigration laws, including civil and criminal penalties, and then given authority to enforce those laws, situations such as the one impacting U.S. citizens like Mr. Caraballo will become more prevalent?